

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISLAMA 05482 080504Z

15

ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01 ACDA-19 IO-14 SCI-06 AEC-11

DRC-01 /179 W

----- 080603

R 071130Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5109

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJ: GOP REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO GOP OFFICIAL, PAKS HOPE TO RE-SCHEDULE POSTPONED BILATERAL TALKS WITH INDIA BUT NEED ENCOURAGING MOVE FROM INDIA TO DO SO. BHUTTO HAS REPLIED TO PRIMIN GANDHI'S LETTER WITH MESSAGE SUGGESTING GOI ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM. GOP HAS SPECIAL NEED FOR OUTSIDE SECURITY GUARANTEE BECAUSE ONLY PAKISTAN IS IMMEDIATELY THREATENED BY INDIAN NUCLEAR DEVICE. GOP SEES INDIA AS WISHING TO IMPOSE "MONROE DOCTRINE" ON SOUTH ASIA, IS DETERMINED TO RESIST. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF ACCOMPANIED BY JANES NACH, DEPARTMENT'S
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PAGE 02 ISLAMA 05482 080504Z

INDIA DESK OFFICER DESIGNATE, CALLED ON FOREIGN

MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR SOUTH ASIA, ABDUL SATTAR, JUNE 6 TO DISCUSS SITUATION RESULTING FROM INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST AND GOP DECISION TO POSTPONE SCHEDULED JUNE 10 MEETING WITH INDIANS (ISLAMABAD 5270). SATTAR SOUNDED DISCOURAGING NOTE AS HE LAID OUT LIST OF OBSTACLES IN ALWAYS-ROCKY PATH TO NORMALIZATION OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS WITH THE COMMENT, "WE ARE NOT COMMUNICATING TO ONE ANOTHER. THE INDIANS ARE NOT WILLING TO UNDERSTAND GOP CONCERNS."

2. SATTAR SAID THAT PRIOR TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST GOP HAD BEEN FULLY PREPARED FOR BILATERAL TALKS, WITH DRAFT AGREEMENTS READY FOR SIGNATURE IN AREAS OF VISAS, PILGRIM FACILITIES, POST AND TELEGRAPH FEES AND FACILITIES. GOP HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO STRESS PUBLICLY THAT TALKS HAD BEEN POSTPONED, NOT CANCELLED. GOP STILL HOPED THAT THEY COULD BE HELD WHEN PAK PUBLIC OPINION HAD BECOME LESS SENSITIVE AND, HOPEFULLY, WHEN INDIA HAD MADE AN ENCOURAGING MOVE. IN ANSWER TO EMBOFF QUERY, SATTAR SUGGESTED THAT LEAST GOI WOULD DO WOULD BE TO SUPPORT CALL FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY GUARANTEE FOR NATIONS FACED WITH NUCLEAR THREAT - SOMETHING IT HAD DONE IN PAST. GUARANTEE, HE POINTED OUT, COULD BE IN GENERAL FORM AND NOT DIRECTED SPECIFICALLY AT INDIA.

3. ACCORDING TO SATTAR, BHUTTO HAS REPLIED TO MRS. GANDHI'S LETTER ON NUCLEAR TEST WITH MESSAGE SUGGESTING THAT GOI ACCEPT INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS FOR ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES, ARGUING THAT IF INDIANS ARE NOT INTENT UPON WEAPONS PRODUCTION, THIS ACTION WOULD NOT HINDER GOI'S PEACEFUL PROGRAM AND WOULD PUT INDIA'S NEIGHBORS AT EASE. BHUTTO REPORTEDLY STRESSED THAT GOP'S PRIMARY CONCERN WAS INDIA'S NUCLEAR CAPABILITY RATHER THAN ITS INTENT; INTENT COULD CHANGE AS NEW INDIAN GOVERNMENTS CAME AND WENT BUT CAPABILITY REMAINED.

4. SATTAR SAID HE WAS MOST DISCOURAGED THAT INDIANS WERE NOW CLAIMING GOP HAD NEVER BEEN SINCERE ABOUT ENDING CONFRONTATION BUT HAD WANTED ONLY TO OBTAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ISLAMA 05482 080504Z

RECOVERY OF ITS LOST TERRITORY AND POW'S. ALL-INDIA RADIO, HE COMPLAINED, WAS NOW REPORTING SUCH COMMENTS AND STEPPING UP ITS COVERAGE OF PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL TROUBLES. A TIMETABLE FOR TALKS? ACCORDING TO SATTAR IT WOULD BE SEVERAL MONTHS OR THEY COULD BE STALLED INDEFINITELY IF CONFIDENCE IN MUTUAL DESIRE FOR PEACEFUL AND FREINDLY RELATIONS WERE DESTROYED.

5. DISCUSSING GOP'S NEED FOR SECURITY QUARANTEE, SATTAR ASSERTED THAT ONLY AGAINST PAKISTAN WAS INDIAN NUCLEAR DEVICE A REAL THREAT: NO SOPHISTICATED DELIVERY SYSTEM WAS REQUIRED TO PUT A BOMB IN KARACHI HARBOR OR LAHORE RAILWAY STATION. HE MOVED IN TO PAINT PICTURE OF INTERNATIONAL CLAOS AND DESTRUCTION IF NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION WERE NOT STOPPED. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BEST TO KEEP NUCLEAR POWERS TO FIVE, SATTAR ASSERTED, AND IT WAS STILL WORTHWHILE TO TRY TO LIMIT NUMBER TO SIX BUT THIS WOULD REQUIRE CONCERNED EFFORT BY INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. BHUTTO, HE SAID, DID NOT WANT TO DEVELOP A PAK NUCLEAR CAPABILITY BECAUSE IT WOULD MEAN SACRIFICE OF COUNTRY'S CHANCES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

6. EMBOFF INQUIRED ABOUT CHINESE RESPONSE TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST. SATTAR SAID THAT CHINESE HAD NOT COMMENTED AT ALL. CHINA WAS NOT WORRIED FOR ITSELF, HE ADDED, BECAUSE ITS ADVANCED NUCLEAR PROGRAM WAS A DETERRENT BUT PRC WAS "CONCERNED OVER THE POTENTIAL DESTABLIZING EFFECT OF THE EXPLOSION ON SOUTH ASIAN RELATIONS". REFRAINING FROM FURTHER COMMENT ON CHINA. SATTAR OBSERVED THAT ALTHOUGH BOTH INDIA AND PAISTAN HAD AGREED AT SIMLA TO SEARCH FOR SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS ON "BILATERAL BASIS", THE TWO HAD DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDING OF "BILATERALISM". INDIA, SATTAR CHARGED, WANTED TO IMPOSE A "MONROE DOCTRINE" ON SOUTH ASIA AND KEEP OUTSIDE POWERS FROM ENTERING HER SPHERE OF INFLUENCE. GOP, HOWEVER, COULD NOT ACCEPT THIS. WHILE PAKISTAN WAS WILLING TO SEEK NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF BILATERAL PROBLEMS, GOP WOULD INSIST ON BEING HEARD, USING INTERATIONAL FORUMS FOR REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES AND SEARCHING FOR OUTSIDE POLITICAL AND SECURITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 04 ISLAMA 05482 080504Z

SUPPORT, HE SAID.

COMMENT: SATTAR'S REMARKS GENERALLY REFLECTED EARLIER OFFICIAL STATEMENTS EXCEPT FOR COMMENT CONCERNING LIKELIHOOD THAT INDIANS WOULD USE BOMB AGAINST PAKISTAN, WHICH WE HAVE NOT HEARD BEFORE FROM GOP OFFICIALS. THRUST OF HIS PRESENTATION WAS THAT INDIA, BEFORE MOUNTING NUCLEAR TEST, SHOULD HAVE FORESEEN THAT PAKISTAN'S SENSITIVITY REGARDING ITS SECURITY WOULD FORCE GOP TO TURN TO INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ENDANGER BILATERAL APPROACH TO SETTLEMENT OF INDO-PAK DIFFERENCES. LUPPI

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MEETINGS, NUCLEAR CAPABILITIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 JUN 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: smithrj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ISLAMA05482
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740147-0238
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740666/aaaacekv.tel
Line Count: 166
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: smithrj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2002 by garlanwa>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by smithrj>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GOP REACTION TO INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO GOP OFFICIAL, PAKS HOPE TO RE-
TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005